

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Executive Office of Environmental Affairs ■ MEPA Office**

**ENF**

**Environmental  
Notification Form**

<i>For Office Use Only</i> <i>Executive Office of Environmental Affairs</i>
EOEA No.: <u>14395</u> MEPA Analyst: <u>Aisling Eglinton</u> Phone: 617-626- <u>1084</u>

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: Worcester Blackstone Visitor Center		
Street: 123 McKeon Road		
Municipality: Worcester	Watershed: Blackstone	
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: N15353502, E883264	Latitude: 42.235905 Longitude: -71.796856	
Estimated commencement date: 3/2009	Estimated completion date: 3/2010	
Approximate cost: \$2.5 million (site only)	Status of project design: 100	%complete
Proponent: Michael V. O'Brien, City Manager, City of Worcester		
Street: 455 Main Street		
Municipality: Worcester	State: MA	Zip Code: 01608
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this ENF May Be Obtained: Stephen Crane, Special Projects Coordinator		
Firm/Agency: City of Worcester, EDD	Street: 44 Front Street Suite 530	
Municipality: Worcester	State: MA	Zip Code: 01608
Phone: (508) 799-1400 x242	Fax: (508) 766-1524	E-mail: cranes@ci.worcester.ma.us

- Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)?  
 Yes  No
- Has this project been filed with MEPA before?  
 Yes (EOEA No. \_\_\_\_\_)  No
- Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before?  
 Yes (EOEA No. 6180 & 13642)  No
- Is this an Expanded ENF (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) requesting:
- a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8))  Yes  No
  - a Special Review Procedure? (see 301CMR 11.09)  Yes  No
  - a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11)  Yes  No
  - a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11)  Yes  No

Identify any financial assistance or land transfer from an agency of the Commonwealth, including the agency name and the amount of funding or land area (in acres): Massachusetts Highway Department is contributing up to \$4.4 million for the project and transferring over 6.3 acres of land to this project.

Are you requesting coordinated review with any other federal, state, regional, or local agency?  
 Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)  No

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals: The project is exempt from local zoning (see attached letter from City of Worcester) but is subject to permitting by the local Conservation Commission.

Which ENF or EIR review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03):

- |  |                                       |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land | <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Species | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands, Waterways, & Tidelands                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Air          | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid & Hazardous Waste                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACEC            | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical & Archaeological Resources |

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
<b>LAND</b>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Superseding Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 91 License <input type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification <input type="checkbox"/> MHD or MDC Access Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Water Management Act Permit <input type="checkbox"/> New Source Approval <input type="checkbox"/> DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Permits <i>(including Legislative Approvals) – Specify:</i> <u>Special Legislation authorizing 99-year lease of Article 97 land.</u>
Total site acreage	7.3+/-			
New acres of land altered		2.70		
Acres of impervious area	3.17	.14	3.31	
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		0		
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		0		
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		0		
<b>STRUCTURES</b>				
Gross square footage	72,550	610+/-	73,160+/-	
Number of housing units	0	0	0	
Maximum height (in feet)	33	0	33	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
Vehicle trips per day	0	<500 (peak)	<500 (peak)	
Parking spaces	10+/-	66	76+/-	
<b>WATER/WASTEWATER</b>				
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	0 (vacant)	2600+/-	2600+/-	
GPD water withdrawal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	0 (vacant)	5,490	5,490	
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	N/A	N/A	N/A	

**CONSERVATION LAND:** Will the project involve the conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?

Yes (Specify Care, custody, and control of the site will be transferred from the City of Worcester to the Worcester Historical Museum through a 99-year lease. Additionally, the parcel that is subject to Article 97 will be converted from passive open space into an active recreational space that will include a parking area. The parcel will remain open to the public and support activities that are accessory to the use of the site as a visitor center and museum.)  No

Will it involve the release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction?

Yes (Specify)  No

**RARE SPECIES:** Does the project site include Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities?

Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)  No

**HISTORICAL /ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES:** Does the project site include any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

Yes (Specify Site is within a National Register of Historic Places district)  No

If yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources?

Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)  No

**AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN:** Is the project in or adjacent to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern?

Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)  No

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project description should include (a) a description of the project site, (b) a description of both on-site and off-site alternatives and the impacts associated with each alternative, and (c) potential on-site and off-site mitigation measures for each alternative (*You may attach one additional page, if necessary.*)

Please see attached project description. For the purposes of this project, no alternatives analysis was performed. The site was identified as the ideal location for the Worcester Blackstone Visitor Center very early in the Route 146 planning process. The construction yielded a site that is bounded by Providence and Worcester Rail Road tracks, the highway, and the McKeon Road extension—eliminating any off-site alternatives. Additionally, the commitment to rehabilitate the former Washburn and Moen factory building resulted in only one on-site alternative for parking: the vacant, contaminated former Patriot Metals site that was taken under Article 97 for open space purposes as replacement land. To ensure the viability of the Visitor Center, a portion of the Patriot Metals parcel must be used as parking. To support the mission of the Worcester Historical Museum, the portion not used for parking must be kept as active recreational space. This is consistent with other visitor centers in the Commonwealth that are located on similarly restricted Article 97 land. While the City will pursue special legislation to lease the site to the Worcester Historical Museum for 99 years, the Article 97 designation will remain in place.

**LAND SECTION – all proponents must fill out this section**

**I. Thresholds / Permits**

A. Does the project meet or exceed any review thresholds related to **land** (see 301 CMR 11.03(1))  
\_\_\_ Yes X No; if yes, specify each threshold:

**II. Impacts and Permits**

A. Describe, in acres, the current and proposed character of the project site, as follows:

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Total</u>
Footprint of buildings	<u>0.87</u>	<u>0.01</u>	<u>0.88</u>
Roadways, parking, and other paved areas	<u>2.3</u>	<u>0.13</u>	<u>2.43</u>
Other altered areas (describe)	<u>4.1</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>4.1</u>
		(open areas that have been landscaped or otherwise cleared)	
Undeveloped areas	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

B. Has any part of the project site been in active agricultural use in the last three years?  
\_\_\_ Yes X No; if yes, how many acres of land in agricultural use (with agricultural soils) will be converted to nonagricultural use?

C. Is any part of the project site currently or proposed to be in active forestry use?  
 Yes  No; if yes, please describe current and proposed forestry activities and indicate whether any part of the site is the subject of a DEM-approved forest management plan:

D. Does any part of the project involve conversion of land held for natural resources purposes in accordance with Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?  Yes  No; if yes, describe: A portion of the site, approximately 3.17 acres, is open space taken under Article 97 as replacement land. As mentioned, special legislation will be pursued to lease the site to the Worcester Historical Museum for 99 years. However, the Article 97 restriction will remain and a portion of the site will be developed into a parking area for the adjacent Visitor Center; the remainder of the site will be converted to active recreational space that will be open to the public. This is similar to other visitor centers that are located on protected land.

E. Is any part of the project site currently subject to a conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction or watershed preservation restriction?  Yes  No; if yes, does the project involve the release or modification of such restriction?  Yes  No; if yes, describe:

F. Does the project require approval of a new urban redevelopment project or a fundamental change in an existing urban redevelopment project under M.G.L.c.121A?  Yes  No; if yes, describe:

G. Does the project require approval of a new urban renewal plan or a major modification of an existing urban renewal plan under M.G.L.c.121B? Yes  No  ; if yes, describe:

H. Describe the project's stormwater impacts and, if applicable, measures that the project will take to comply with the standards found in DEP's Stormwater Management Policy: Stormwater effects will be mitigated using Best Management Practices (BMPs) prescribed by the 2009 DEP Stormwater Management Standards. Minor stormwater impacts are mitigated using BMP's listed in the DEP BMP handbook and the stormwater management system has been designed in accordance with the 2009 DEP Stormwater Management Standards. An Order of Conditions has been issued by the Worcester Conservation Commission.

I. Is the project site currently being regulated under M.G.L.c.21E or the Massachusetts Contingency Plan? Yes  No  ; if yes, what is the Release Tracking Number (RTN)? 2-0000408

J. If the project is site is within the Chicopee or Nashua watershed, is it within the Quabbin, Ware, or Wachusett subwatershed?  Yes  No; if yes, is the project site subject to regulation under the Watershed Protection Act?  Yes  No

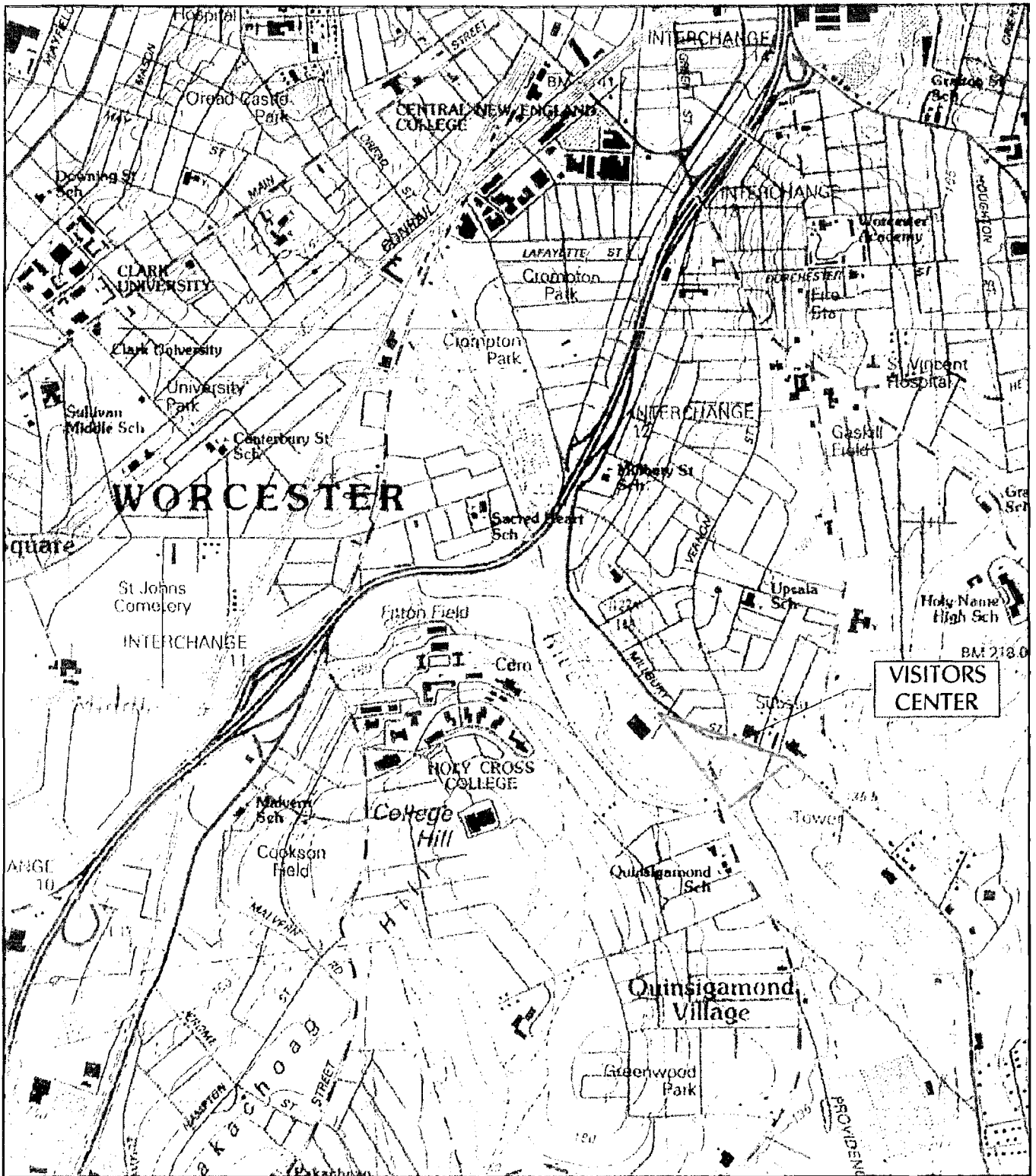
K. Describe the project's other impacts on land:

In addition to the parking lot and open area, a bioretention system will be constructed to manage stormwater. A segment of the Blackstone River Bikeway will also be constructed through the site.

### III.. Consistency

A. Identify the current municipal comprehensive land use plan and the open space plan and describe the consistency of the project and its impacts with that plan(s):


The site has been planned as the location of parking and open space to support the planned Visitor Center for over a decade. The project will be the fulfillment of many years of public input, partnership development, and consensus building. In short, it is completely consistent with the plan



**WORCESTER-  
BLACKSTONE  
VISITORS CENTER**  
 121 MORTON ROAD  
 WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS  
 FORMERLY 744 NINEBURY STREET

**LOCUS PLAN**

**designLAB architects**  
 111 ATLANTIC AVENUE  
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02111

  
**LANCARUX PAGANO  
ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS**  
100 STATE STREET, SUITE 1000, BOSTON, MA 02109

